Environmental crisis in Chandigarh

4378 SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chandigarh is on the verge of an environmental crisis with the lush green belt being replaced by concrete structures;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of original area of green belt and the structures presently lying thereon; and

(c) the steps being taken to restore the eco-system of the city?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Conference on Evironment and Development held at RIO

4379. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of delegates and their Companion sent to the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development held recently at Rio De Janerio;

(b) wrat is the total amount spent in Indian Currency and Foreign exchange separately for this purpose; and

(c) what expenditure was iscurred on Prime Minister's trip to attend the Rio Conference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) The relevant information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Forest cover in Bihar

4380. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present forest cover in Bihar;

(b) whether Government are aware that the forest cover in the State is depleting due to the use of wood as fuel for cooking and other purposes;

(c) if so, what action Government propose to take to make available firewood in plenty in the State without disturbing the ecological balance;

(d) what action Government have taken for the large scale afforestation in Bihar, particularly on the wastelands; and

(e) what co-operation the Government of Bihar is providing in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The actual forest cover in Bihar as repirted in the State of Forest Report 1991 is 26,668 sq. Kms.

(b) There is no depletion in the Forest cover in Bihar, Since it has remained unaltered during the period 1985—87 to 1987—89 as per the State of Forest Reports 1989 and 1991 respectively.

(c) Felling and extraction of trees in the forests are done by the State Wing of the State Forest Department of Bihar. This Wing has established fuelwood and small wood depots in urban and rural areas.

The village rightholders also meet their requirements from right-holders' coupes for their fuelwood and small timber requirements free of cost.

(d) State Forest Department is doing large scale plantation on road side, canal banks and other Government lands in North Bihar. For South Bihar an externally aided Social Forestry Project was started in 1985 and plantations have been raised in degraded forests as well as on raiyati (farmers) lands and other Government lands on a large scale. The social Forestry Project has ended in March 1992, but plantations are still being raised in depleted forest areas under schemes approved